

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 EB-08 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 069925

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS MPOL PFOR PGOV PORG SHUM PARM EC PE

SUBJECT: ECUADOREAN MISSION TO WASHINGTON

REFERENCE: STATE 69266

1. ON MARCH 25 ECUADOREAN UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS JOSE AYALA, AND CHAIRMAN OF ECUADOR'S JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, RENAN OLMEDO, CALLED ON ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ARA LUERS. THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS WERE DISCUSSED:

2. ECUADOR'S SHOPPING LIST

A) AYALA REPEATED MANY OF THE POINTS COVERED IN REFTTEL,
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ESPECIALLY PARA 3A RE KFIRS. HE ADDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, WHICH RECEIVED THE ECUADOREANS THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 24, HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFIC. HE SAID THAT ECUADOR WAS ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 - F-4 AIRCRAFT;
- 2 - IMPROVED HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM;
- 3 - TWO DESTROYERS.

B) LUERS REPLIED THAT THE US DECISION ON THE PROPOSED KFIR

SALE WAS FINAL. HE SAID THAT AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE KFIR WAS A POSSIBILITY BUT HE QUOTED UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS HABIB, WHO HAD POINTED OUT TO THE ECUADOREANS ON MARCH 24 THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM OF THE US APPEARING TO SEEK COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE FROM THE KFIR VETO. LUERS STATED THAT THE US WAS CONCERNED BY THE PERUVIAN ARMS BUILD-UP AND THAT WE WOULD DO WHAT WE COULD WITHIN OUR LATIN AMERICAN POLICY TO HELP ECUADOR. HE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT WE VALUED OUR RELATIONS WITH ECUADOR AND THAT WE WANTED TO ENCOURAGE SUBREGIONAL INTEGRATION THRU SUCH MEANS AS THE ANDEAN PACT.

3. ECUADOR-PERU RELATIONS

A) ANDEAN OFFICE DIRECTOR DEVINE TOLD THE ECUADOREANS THAT THE USG DOES NOT YET HAVE A FULLY DEFINED AND APPROVED ARMS TRANSFER POLICY, WHICH MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO ANSWER SUCH SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR MATERIEL. HE CONTINUED BY MENTIONING HABIB'S IDEA OF MARCH 24 CONCERNING POSSIBLE POLITICAL SOLUTIONS. DEVINE SAID THAT THE USG CERTAINLY STANDS FOR PEACEFUL RELATIONS AND THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN LATIN AMERICA, AND IN THIS CONTEXT WOULD ALWAYS WELCOME ANY ECUADOREAN SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT THE US COULD DO TO STRENGTHEN PEACE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ANDEAN SUB-REGION. HE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT THE USG HAD EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN TO PERU ABOUT THE LATTER'S ARMS BUILD-UP, BUT THAT OTHER PEOPLE KEEP ASKING IF OTHER INTERESTED NATIONS HAVE ALSO DONE SO.

B) AYALA REPLIED THAT ECUADOR HAD BEEN TRYING TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH PERU SINCE 1968, BUT SINCE THE STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS ALWAYS ONE OF MISTRUST, THERE HAVE BEEN NO RESULTS. HE SAID THAT THERE HAVE BEEN DIRECT ECUADOR-PERU TALKS AND IN FACT AYALA HIMSELF HAD DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH THE PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR IN QUITO. THE PERUVIANS' ANSWER, HOWEVER, WAS ALWAYS THE SAME: WE ARE ONLY REPLACING OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT. THEREFORE, THE GOE BELIEVES THAT DIRECT ECUADOR-PERU TALKS HOLD NO CHANCE FOR REDUCTION OF WEAPON PURCHASES.

C) OLMEDO THEN REMINDED EVERYONE THAT THE DECLARATION OF AYACUCHO WAS ORIGINALLY A PERUVIAN IDEA. HE SAID THAT TALKS HAD BEEN HELD ALL OVER SOUTH AMERICA BUT WITH NO RESULTS. WHY? BECAUSE PERU WAS NOT REALLY INTERESTED AND CONTINUED TO BUILD-UP ITS ARMS SUPPLIES.

D) AIR FORCE COLONEL GOETSCHER, WHO ACCOMPANIED AYALA AND OLMEDO, THEN RIDICULED THE PERUVIAN ENCIRCLEMENT

THESIS OF HAVING TO ARM TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST FIVE

CONTIGUOUS COUNTRIES. HE ASKED HOW PERU COULD EVER THINK OF DEFENDING ITSELF SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST BRAZIL.

E) AYALA SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE US TO STUDY THE POLITICAL POSSIBILITIES. HE SAID THE US HAD MORAL AND SPECIAL INFLUENCE TO LESSEN TENSIONS IN THE SUB-REGION. HE GAVE TWO EXAMPLES:

1 - A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA, WHICH HE FELT WOULD HAVE PEACEFUL BENEFITS;
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2 - US-PERU TALKS, WITH THE US INFLUENCING PERU TO OPEN ITS DOORS MORE TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE PERU-ECUADOR BORDER DISPUTE.

F) LUERS REPLIED THAT THE US WANTED TO PARTICIPATE IN A MORE HUMBLE MANNER. HE SAID THAT THE US WAS NOT GOING TO BE THE OLD UNCLE SAM AND HE CITED AS EXAMPLES:

1 - THE US WOULD NEVER PUT TROOPS ON THE MAINLAND OF ASIA AGAIN;
2 - THE US WOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN LATIN AMERICAN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES. THEREFORE, HE HAD TO REPLY THAT THE US WOULD NOT JUMP IN ALONG THE LINES OF AYALA'S SUGGESTIONS.

G) AYALA REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT SUGGESTING THE US SHOULD SUPPORT ECUADOR, BUT SHOULD SHOW CONCERN.

4. RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

A) DEVINE EXPRESSED US INTEREST IN THIS POSSIBILITY AND THE PROSPECTIVE TIMETABLE AIMING AT JANUARY 1978.

B) AYALA REPLIED THAT THE GOE DEFINITELY WANTED TO RETURN POWER TO CIVILIANS. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH A PROCESS WAS NOT EASY, AND WOULD INVOLVE TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTIES. NEVERTHELESS, HE STATED THAT THE GOE WAS MAKING A DETERMINED EFFORT TO SUCCEED. HE CITED AS A GOOD EXAMPLE THE TRIBUNAL THAT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED RECENTLY TO OVERSEE THE REFERENDUM SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR TO DECIDE ECUADOR'S CONSTITUTION.

C) OLMEDO EMPHASIZED THAT HE, TOO, WANTED TO SEE A RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC RULE, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS MILITARY. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WANTED TO SEE THE GOE RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE STEP-BY-STEP -- WITH STABILITY. HE SAID THAT THE GOE COULD NOT RETURN ECUADOR TO CHAOS, AND,
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THEREFORE, WOULD HAVE TO TIME THE RETURN PERFECTLY IN ORDER TO DO IT RIGHT.

5. GULF OIL CORPORATION

A) DEVINE STATED THAT THE USG HAS NOTED THE MANY MONTHS OF DELAY AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SIGNING OF THE TRANSFER AGREEMENT.

B) AYALA GAVE A ONE-SIDED PRESENTATION STATING IN EFFECT THAT THE DELAY IN THE SIGNING WAS ENTIRELY GULF'S FAULT. HE CLAIMED THAT GULF HAD PUT UP OBSTACLES TO THE FINAL SIGNING, AND STATED THAT WHEN GULF WENT ALONG WITH THE MINOR LEGAL MATTERS REMAINING, THE GOE WOULD SIGN.

6. ECUADOR'S VOTING RECORD IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS

A) DEVINE NOTED THAT ECUADOR'S RECORD ON CERTAIN ISSUES SUCH AS GUAM PRESENTED DIFFICULTIES IN FOSTERING A BETTER BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, AND HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT OUR POSITIONS WOULD CONVERGE MORE THIS YEAR. HE ADDED THAT THE USG HAD TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING ECUADOR'S VOTE AGAINST US IN THE LAST UNGA ON THE GUAM QUESTION SINCE WE COULD DISCERN NO ECUADOREAN VITAL INTEREST OR PRINCIPLES INVOLVED.

B) AYALA REPLIED THAT ECUADOR OPERATES IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS FROM A BASE OF PRINCIPLES. THEREFORE, AN ECUADOREAN VOTE IS NOT AGAINST THE US BUT FOR ECUADOREAN PRINCIPLES. HE CITED AN EXAMPLE THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH GUAM, AND HE DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO DEVINE'S QUESTION ABOUT GUAM.

C) AT THIS POINT OLMEDO STEPPED IN AND STATED THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAD PROTESTED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT ECUADOR'S VOTE ON THE GUAM ISSUE. HE STATED THAT ECUADOR'S FOREIGN POLICY WAS NOT ANTI-US, AND THE ARMED FORCES CONFIDENTIAL

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REGRETTED THE ECUADOREAN VOTE ON GUAM VERY MUCH. HE STATED THAT SOME CHANGES HAD BEEN MADE SINCE THAT VOTE.

7. TRADE ACT OF 1974

AYALA MENTIONED THAT THE MISSION HAD CALLED ON CONGRESSMAN VANIK THAT MORNING (MARCH 25), AND VANIK HAD GIVEN THEM CAUSE TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE TRADE ACT HELPFUL TO ECUADOR GETTING THROUGH CONGRESS THIS YEAR.

8. COMMENT: A) FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW IN THE DEPARTMENT

(DEFENSE IS SENDING A SEPARATE MESSAGE), THE VISIT OF THE GOE'S MISSION WAS A SUCCESS BECAUSE THE ECUADOREANS WERE RECEIVED AT A VERY HIGH LEVEL (DEPUTY SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE, PLUS CONGRESSMAN VANIK), WERE EXTENSIVELY

LISTENED TO (6 HOURS TOTAL) AT A TIME WHEN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS FORMULATING ITS POLICIES, BUT WERE RESTRAINED IN PUSHING FOR ANSWERS TO THEIR REQUESTS FOR ARMS. ALTHOUGH THEIR PRESENTATIONS WERE OFTEN UNDERSTANDABLY ONE-SIDED (ESPECIALLY RE THE DISPUTE WITH GULF), THE ECUADOREANS MADE SOME GOOD ARGUMENTS FOR THEIR POSITIONS, WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED HERE AS DECISIONS ARE MADE RE WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT OFFER THEM. AYALA TRIED TO KEEP THE DISCUSSIONS GENERAL, WHILE OLMEDO TRIED TO FOCUS STRICTLY ON MILITARY MATTERS. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE VISITORS DO UNDERSTAND WHY THE ADMINISTRATION CANNOT REPLY SPECIFICALLY RIGHT AWAY.

B) THE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION, AND SOURCES IN THE ECUADOREAN EMBASSY, HAVE TOLD US THAT THE ECUADOREAN VISITORS CONSIDER THE VISIT SUCCESSFUL. WE BELIEVE, OF COURSE, THAT YOU WILL BE GIVEN A MORE CANDID APPRAISAL, WHICH WILL INTEREST US. AS YOU DISCUSS THE VISIT, HOWEVER YOU SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT IN ANY WAY ENCOURAGE THE GOE
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TO ASK TO SEND ANOTHER MISSION WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IF THE ECUADOREANS ASK YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE VALUE OF FOLLOWING UP THIS VISIT WITH A MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MISSION, YOU SHOULD INFORM THEM THAT WASHINGTON WOULD HAVE NOTHING NEW TO SAY, AND, THEREFORE, SUCH A MISSION SHOULD DELAY ANY TRAVEL FOR THE TIME BEING.

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